

## Good Government Is Stressed By Jurist Before Court Crowd

Address Regarded As One of Strongest Heard in County in Recent Years

Making what was regarded as one of the strongest addresses heard in the Martin County courthouse in recent years, Judge W. C. Harris, opening a two weeks term of superior court here yesterday morning, stressed the importance of good government and urged the grand jury-men to break away from routine schedules and do an effective job. While his order calling for a check of those persons who failed to list for taxation commanded strict attention, the jurist's charge from the beginning to end was featured by recommendations and pleas for better government.

The Raleigh jurist, seldom ever raising his voice, put force behind his remarks, and frankly told the jurors that he was not talking just to be talking. "I hope and possibly I beg you to do your part," Judge Harris said. Pointing out what it means to be a grand juror, the speaker said, "It means more than the average persons think it does; it means more than passing on a few bills and making routine inspections with the view of getting through and going home. That's the wrong idea, and good citizens should be glad to serve as members of the grand jury. Grand jurors are the trustees of this county, and they have more power than any other organization or agency in the county."

Without citing crime conditions and making only one reference to any particular law—perjury—Judge Harris stresses the duties of the grand jury. "You are to discuss conditions in the county and see that law is enforced. Then if conditions are not remedied and violations of the law are not checked, you are to see what's wrong and see that violators of the law are indicted and brought to justice. As representatives of the public, you should see that the officers and employees are properly handling their duties, and you should inform the public in your report your findings."

The jurist directed a double-barreled blow against some agencies when he declared that there should be no secrets in public offices. "When the public pays the bill, then it should know all the facts," he declared. In this connection, the names of those receiving old-age assistance and the amounts they receive are, by state agency rulings, withheld from the general public.

The inspection of county offices, schools, county home and other public properties will not follow a routine order if Judge Harris' instructions are followed. "Go into the offices and learn the facts, see that public documents and records are safe, and see that no economy move is launched to impair the efficiency of the offices and officers. Call in the sheriff and ask him about crime conditions in your county, and cooperate with him. Check up on the police chiefs and see if they are working with the office of the sheriff and the sheriff with the police departments. Learn if there is any friction in the law-enforcement agencies. Do something to improve your law enforcement work now and don't wait until some one is murdered to take action where it is needed."

The jurist suggested that a fingerprinting system be maintained, that proper criminal records are kept, and that the officers be encouraged and provided with adequate transportation facilities and free gasoline. The judge commended the officers for the work they do, and stated that many are prone to criticize and withhold any encouragement. In concluding his remarks on law enforcement, Judge Harris said, "Our defense movement lagged, but we are now waking up. We must do the same in

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## Henry Grimes Dies In Robersonville

Henry Grimes, well-known Martin County citizen, died at his home in Robersonville this morning at 1:30 o'clock following a long period of declining health. He was 69 years old, the son of the late James and Caroline Roberson Grimes.

Mr. Grimes, a native of Robersonville, was a faithful servant of the government for a long number of years, retiring not so long ago. He was a devoted member of the Christian church for a long period, and was highly respected by a large number of friends in his home town and throughout the section. Humble in his walk before the Master, his life was marked by its understanding of others and in the service of his fellowman.

He leaves his wife, Miss Isolan Brown before her marriage, and two daughters, Levora and Vera. He also leaves two sisters, Mrs. R. L. Smith, of Robersonville, and Mrs. A. R. Dunning, of Williamston. Funeral services will be conducted tomorrow afternoon at 3 o'clock in the Christian Church at Robersonville by his pastor, Rev. J. M. Perry. Interment will follow in the cemetery there.

## Ill Luck Strikes the Whitfield Family in the County Monday

Ill luck pounced on the Whitfield family in this county yesterday afternoon when the home was destroyed by fire in Gold Point and one of the members was in an automobile accident at Spring Green. Just about the time the family was surveying its loss, word was received from Fort Bragg stating that B. H. Ross, a relative and a former member of the household until he went to the fort, had been in an automobile accident.

Its origin not definitely known, fire thought to have been started from a spark, threatened a greater part of the little county town yesterday afternoon, and if it had not been for the Robersonville Fire Department at least several other buildings would have been burned. The A. B. Whitfield 8-room house was a total loss. The roof on the Clifton Pow-

ell home was damaged, and virtually all of the contents moved from the home to the yard caught fire and were burned. The furniture belonging to Mrs. J. R. Smith, a school teacher and an occupant in the Powell home, was damaged. The home of J. L. Croom caught fire, but it was checked before any great damage resulted. The Robersonville firemen had a difficult time saving the filling station and store owned and operated by Harry Roberson. No estimate on the loss could be had immediately.

It was a hot time in the little town for a short while. The local fire department was called, and just before the volunteers started to take the equipment out, Fire Chief G. P. Hall learned that the fire was being brought under control. Several firemen went there by private conveyance.

## Two Are Sentenced to The Roads For Attack

### SEINE FISHING

Plans are going forward rapidly for opening the seine fishing season in the Roanoke at Jamesville within the next few days, Manager-Owner C. C. Fleming stating yesterday that they planned to make the first haul not later than next Monday. If weather conditions are favorable and arrangements are completed, the first "haul" will be made possibly day after tomorrow. The weather outlook is not considered very favorable just now.

Last season the Jamesville fishery had a very successful season. No one can guess with any degree of accuracy the prospects for the season now at hand.

## Man Gets 15-Year Term in Rape Case In Superior Court

Court Is Expected To Take A Recess This Afternoon Until Next Week

Joseph Thigpen, 23-year-old Oak City Negro, was sentenced by Judge W. C. Harris in superior court here this morning to not less than fifteen and not more than twenty-five years in State's Prison in a case charging him with raping a child under ten years of age.

Thigpen, through his counsel, pleaded guilty of carnal knowledge and it was accepted by the State. Deploable conditions in the home of the attack victim and surrounding the crime itself saved Thigpen's life. It was pointed out that the girl was drunk when she was attacked, that Thigpen had been an intimate guest of other members of the family on the day of the attack.

"I am sending you to prison for at least fifteen years, and I hope that it will be a lesson to other members of your race," Judge Harris told Thigpen in pronouncing the sentence.

During the process of another trial, Judge Harris admonished members of the colored audience crowding into the courtroom. "You should have more respect for your own race," he said after several had laughed out loud at a remark heard from the witness stand.

After spending much time in the trial of the Godard-Lilley assault case yesterday, the court started working toward a recess early this morning. The grand jury was said to have been well up with its work shortly before noon, and the court is likely to recess this afternoon until next Monday when it will call civil cases for trial.

Eddie Salisbury, a thief with a long reputation, pleaded guilty in the case charging him with breaking and entering.

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### PRE-SCHOOL CLINICS

A series of pre-school clinics for the examination of those little tots who are to enter school next fall will be held in the county beginning next week, the office of the superintendent of schools announced today, as follows:

Williamston, March 25 and 26; Jamesville, March 27; Bear Grass, March 28; Farm Life, March 31; Hamilton and Hassell, April 1; Oak City, April 28; Everetts, April 29, and Robersonville-Gold Point, April 30.

Parents of all the little folks entering school next term for the first time are urged to have them at the appointed places for physical examinations on the determined dates.

## Beer Hall Dynamite Case Blows Up in the Court Here Monday

Greater Part of Yesterday Is Devoted To Trial of Godard-Lilley

Little did they realize it at the time, but Alton Lilley and Joe Lancer Godard last January 25 in a brawl at a Negro dance hall and pool room near Dardens carved themselves out a two-year sentence on the roads of North Carolina. The trial of the two white men required a greater part of yesterday, and would hardly have been cleared from the docket before this morning had the defense carried their cause to the jury. After hearing much testimony, including that of witnesses, Bertha Morgan Price and Minnie Owens, the defense counsel, J. C. Smith and E. S. Peel, pleaded the two men guilty of an assault with a deadly weapon. The plea was accepted and Judge W. C. Harris, presiding over the current two weeks term of the superior court, sentenced them to the roads for a term of two years each.

There were marked variations in the testimony heard, but summed up in a few words the trouble started when Godard and Lilley accompanied by the Morgan and Owens girls went to a Negro pool room and dance hall at Piney Woods near Dardens on Saturday night, January 25. Carlton Reason and Nathan Cole, young white men, were there playing pool. One of the young women claimed they made a slurring remark to her, and Lilley and Godard, armed with their pocket knives, immediately went into action. Lilley carving Reason almost beyond repair. Godard, fighting against a cast Cole was wearing to protect a recent injury, made little progress in his attack.

While there is some doubt if the jury would have found the two defendants guilty of an assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill, it is reasonably certain that had a verdict been returned against the two, Judge Harris would have increased the length of the road terms. The action of the court temporarily, at least, halts a yard-long crime record for Godard.

In a second case charging Lilley with a knife attack on James Holliday and coming up from the county court on appeal, the court sentenced the defendant to the roads for a term of 12 months. The sentence is to begin at the expiration of the first, but Judge Harris suspended it upon good behavior on Lilley's part during five years following the completion of the first sentence.

Williamston's dynamite case in

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## Germany Now Faces Stiffer Opposition In Aggression March

Varied Developments Reported On the European War Front

Facing a stiffening opposition along all fronts, diplomatic as well as military, Germany has the world guessing as to what Hitler will dare do in the immediate future or in the few weeks just ahead. Movements and activities in the Balkans would indicate that a day of reckoning is near in the war in that sector with the Italians virtually obliterated in eastern Africa and beaten in Albania.

The movement of thousands of British troops into Greece and possibly Turkey, and a counter movement of German troops into the Bulgarian-Greece frontier sector are causing much speculation in the world today. Some say a clash is imminent while others say no immediate "show-down" is expected on the part of Germany.

A delay in Yugoslavia's action to sign with Germany is seen as a stiffening opposition to Hitler in his march of aggression.

Turns in the diplomatic world are attributed, more or less, to President Roosevelt's fire-side chat last Saturday night, which was acclaimed throughout the democratic world and which created a new hope for Britain, Greece and subjugated countries. In support of that talk and in support of the lease-lend bill, Congress is now considering a 7-billion dollar appropriation for financing aid to Britain, Greece, China and other countries taking a stand against Nazism.

The air warfare that exacted heavy tolls on life and property in Liverpool, and on German centers, too, during last week, has apparently slackened. Mussolini apparently is on his last legs in east Africa, thanks to the British forces, and in Albania thanks to the heroic Greeks.

A new war threat was reported in the Atlantic yesterday when German long-range submarines were reported this side of the 42nd meridian or about 500 miles off Newfoundland. Coast Guard patrols, working in that area, said they had seen no signs of any German war boats of any description. British shipping losses continue to climb and are now past the five-million-ton mark, one report stating that 100,000 tons of British shipping went down last week. Along with the British shipping loss came a report stating that Germany's queen of the seas, the Bremen, was burning possibly in the Kiel Canal.

Showing every willingness to give all-out aid to Britain, the House Appropriations Committee reported the 7-billion dollar bill to the floor today, and its passage is expected shortly, possibly by tomorrow.

## Higher Crop Loans Expected To Boost Income of Farmers

Administration Determined To Keep Farmers In Step With Industry

Washington—Authoritative farm officials said last week it was a "good guess" that the Administration soon would propose an increase in rates of Government price-supporting crop loans as a method of boosting agricultural income.

The higher loan rates, they indicated, would be accompanied by changes in farm programs which would give the Agricultural Adjustment Administration greater control over production.

These officials predicted that loan rates would be increased from present levels of 9 cents to about 12 cents a pound on cotton and from 65 to about 85 cents a bushel for wheat. The corn loan rate, they said, probably would be left unchanged at 61 cents a bushel.

The higher rates would be offered on this year's crops. Officials said

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## Judge W. C. Harris Orders Tax List Checked For Non - Listers In Charge To County Grand Jury

## Tobacco Plant Shortage Now Expected As Result of Cold

A tobacco plant shortage was feared by farmers in this county today following a cold wave that sent the mercury into the teens late last night. The extent of the damage could not be learned immediately, but farmers feared the worst when they found the ground frozen to a depth of about an inch and their young plants turning black.

It has been an hectic season for farmers since the 1941 tobacco crop. Many farmers state that their plants were killed days ago by cold weather, while others state that they had

bright prospects for a plentiful supply. They are not so certain about their supply following the cold attack last night.

Plants made their appearance in many cases but were later cut down by freezing weather, causing farmers to sow their beds as many as three times in some instances. Farmers, questioned here this morning, were of the opinion that plants of any size were not damaged by the severe cold last night, but the general opinion is that a shortage in tobacco plants can well be expected this spring in this section.

## Property Owners File First Tax Objections

Equalization Board Patient In Listening To Tax Complaints

Believed Changes Will Be In Order in a Few Cases Heard Monday

Meeting as a board of equalization and review in an effort to iron out all possible tax inequalities, the Martin County commissioners held open house in the agricultural building yesterday morning, and patiently listened to twenty-nine complaints directed by owners against the recent values placed upon their properties by the boards of assessors. The authorities remained in session until late afternoon, listening to every claim and every point supporting that claim. It was apparent that the commissioners were anxious to do what was right, to meet the complaints half way and at the same time play fair with those who accepted the decisions of the assessors.

Some of the complainants appeared to the board just to complain, more or less, as a force of habit. Others presented well-founded claims, and still others proved errors of no great consequence had been made. While the hearings were marked by a genuine friendliness on the part of the board, a few cutting remarks were heard from one complainant. The patient group did not fight back but proceeded in the spirit of fairness and with an apparent desire to do what was right.

No final action was taken on the complaints which were carefully entered in the records for later discussion. It is not quite clear just how the board will handle the complaints but it has been suggested that the assessors be called in for advice before taking final action in every case. Possibly, the board will settle some of the cases without first going to the assessors, and will seek their advice in other cases.

A hurried review of the complaints shows that no material change in the tax structure will follow even if all of the requests are granted. It is also apparent that the saving to some of the complainants if their requests are granted will hardly offset the cost of a visit before the board. But every property owner has a perfect right to appeal his case, and the commissioners are anxious to hear everyone.

Property owners were heard yesterday principally from four townships, Jamesville, Williams, Bear Grass and Griffins. Today, property owners from Williamston, Poplar Point and Cross Roads are appearing.

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### QUOTA

Based on the State quota just recently announced, Martin County will be called upon to furnish between 20 and 30 men for the Army in April. The State has been asked to furnish 2,050 men during next month, about 1,500 white and approximately 500 colored men.

Unofficial reports state that this county already has a credit of 82 men which will apply against the next fiscal year quota, it is understood.

The draft board was officially notified this morning that the county is to send ten colored trainees to camp on April 1st, and that is no April fooling.

## Mrs. Melissia Old Passes At Home of Son This Morning

Funeral For Aged Citizen To Be Held In Norfolk, Her Old Home

Mrs. Melissia French Old died at the home of her son, W. E. Old, on East Church Street here this morning at 8:40 o'clock following a long illness. Suffering a stroke of paralysis while visiting in the home of a daughter in Brooklyn a year ago, Mrs. Old had been in feeble health since that time. Coming here soon after she was stricken, Mrs. Old patiently awaited the end which came peacefully while she slept this morning. Confined to her bed during her stay here, Mrs. Old made few acquaintances but in her community circle she made many warm friendships.

The daughter of the late Captain W. H. and Anne French, Mrs. Old was born in Norfolk seventy years ago. She spent her early life there, but following the death of her husband, George Y. Old, she had visited with her children. Mrs. Old was a devoted follower of the Methodist faith, holding membership with the church at Norfolk for a long number of years.

Besides her son here she is survived by four children, Messrs. H. K. Old, of Fredericksburg, and Geo. Y. Old, Jr., of Brooklyn; Mrs. E. B. Heath, of Brooklyn; and Mrs. F. L. Shively, of Norfolk. She also leaves one sister, Mrs. L. M. Lewis, of Parkley, Va., and a foster brother, W. N. French, of Annapolis. Definite plans for the funeral had not been completed at noon today, but the last rites will be held in Norfolk by a former pastor, assisted by Rev. J. H. Smith, pastor of the Williamston Memorial Baptist Church. Interment will follow in the family cemetery at Norfolk.

### Small-Scale Farm Operators

Small-scale farm operators are in quite a few instances, said to be thumbing their noses at the loan sharks in the county this year. With big money coming to them under the soil conservation plan, they will be able to finance their own operations, for the most part.

Yesterday, the office of the county agent received \$7,704.17 for distribution to 150 farmers. The amount represents 63 applications. To date, a total of \$83,953.55, representing 976 of the approximately 1,500 applications, has been received in the county for distribution to 1,614 farmers in this county.

## Expect Indictments In Time For Action By Court Next June

Check of Draft and Automobile Registrations Now Almost Certain

The wheels of justice for tax dodgers were set in motion here yesterday morning when Judge W. C. Harris, in his charge to the grand jury, ordered the county and tax lists checked for non-tax listers. "It has been surprising to learn in other counties how many have been escaping taxation," Judge Harris said in instructing the jury to have the tax authorities of the county and several towns to appear and make a complete report. "You," the judge addressed the jury-men, "ought not to have to pay taxes when others are allowed to go free." He added, "I understand there were nearly 3,000 non-listers found in Wake County. You can't get a man for not paying taxes, but you can indict and prosecute him in the courts for not listing."

According to Judge Harris tax dodging is common in North Carolina, and there is a concerted drive on the part of the superior court judges to break it up. Indictments have been made by the hundreds in some counties.

Tax authorities in this county aren't agreed as to the conditions existing in this county with respect to tax evasion. Some believe there are at least 300 people escaping their fair share of the tax load. Others say there are very few tax evasion cases. It is an established fact that there are a few persons who did not list their holdings even after they had been warned by the county commissioners publicly and by the list-takers personally.

Up until two years ago, very few indictments were made in cases charging citizens with evading taxation. Last year and the year before a few cases were carried into the courts, and others who had evaded the obligation listed this year. Every possible warning was given this year, and the non-listers have very little ground to fight an indictment and subsequent action in the courts.

Commenting on the situation as it exists in some counties, Judge Harris said that it had been found that those persons who evade their share of the tax burden are often the ones who offer the most criticism against the government and its officers. He also intimated that they should be made to answer, and that prosecution in the courts is indeed necessary.

Plans for checking the tax books have not been completed following the judge's charge to the jury yesterday, but it is understood that the tax records will be compared with the last October draft registration and with automobile registrations in Raleigh. In a number of counties it has been customary to include the names of non-listers in the grand jury report with an order from the court directing its publication.

A complete tax list is recognized as an important foundation to good government which Judge Harris so strongly stressed in a fifty-minute charge to the grand jury yesterday morning.

## Two Escape Injury In Auto Accident

Mrs. Dewey Edmondson, of Hassell, and J. B. Whitfield, of Oak City, escaped uninjured in an automobile crash at a road intersection just a few feet from the Spring Green Primitive Baptist Church yesterday afternoon about 3:45 o'clock.

Mrs. Edmondson, driving a 1940 model Chevrolet, had started across the Gold Point-Hamilton Road highway when Mr. Whitfield's car, traveling from Gold Point, struck the rear right fender. The Edmondson car swerved and came to a stop under a pump shelter on the church grounds. The shelter collapsed when the car was removed, it was stated.

Mr. Whitfield had just been to Gold Point where the home of his father, A. B. Whitfield, had burned a short time before. Damage to the Edmondson car was placed at \$75 and that to the Whitfield car, a 1941 Pontiac, was estimated at \$50.

## Fire Damages Roof On Humble Negro Home Here

Starting from a spark, fire damaged the roof on the humble two-room home of Matilda Wiggins, colored, on South Elm Street at 12:45 this afternoon. Firemen, using a small tank hose from the fire truck, brought the fire under control, and no great loss was reported.